


<p style="text-align: center;"><b>New York City, New York</b>  <b>Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilot</b></p> <p>U.S. EPA, Region 2          290 Broadway          New York, New York</p> <p style="text-align: right;">September 2001</p>	
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## Program Information

The EPA Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower States, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is an abandoned, idled, or under-used industrial or commercial facility where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by real or perceived contamination. Since 1995, EPA has funded more than 300 Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilots, at up to \$200,000 each, enabling localities to clarify environmental contamination issues in order to facilitate redevelopment. Pilot funds are for site assessment, reuse planning and related community involvement. EPA Region 2 provides direct support to the States, Tribes, counties, municipalities, and communities of New York, New Jersey, Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands as they continue to seek new methods to promote site assessment, environmental cleanup, and redevelopment.

## I. Overview

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) selected New York City, New York, as a Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilot in March 1996. New York City is home to over eight million people in five boroughs: the Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, Queens and Staten Island. The City's industrial areas have typically been located along the City's waterfronts and adjacent to major roadways and rail lines. However, since the City's founding and before a comprehensive zoning plan was adopted in 1961, the location of commercial and industrial activities was largely unregulated. Vacant and underutilized properties tend to be located in disadvantaged sections of the City where a high percentage of households are below the Federal poverty threshold. These brownfield properties represent great economic potential and an opportunity for neighborhood revitalization. The reuse of brownfield sites creates employment opportunities and revitalizes economically depressed communities.

The objective of the New York City Pilot is to identify measures that will accelerate the pace and enlarge the scale of cleanup and redevelopment of the City's brownfield sites. The grant is being used to explore issues that impede the reuse of brownfield sites, to test solutions, and to develop recommendations. Through this process, the City has considered various brownfield sites and selected five for assessment under the grant. The New York City initiative is managed by the Mayor's Office of Environmental Coordination (MOEC).

## II. Brownfields Pilot Progress

The Pilot strives to accelerate the identification, clean-up, and redevelopment of the City's brownfield sites. To harness the expertise and address the concerns of stakeholders, the City created a public/private Brownfields Task Force comprised of City, State, and Federal agencies, community groups, financial institutions, consultants, environmental organizations, educational institutions, real estate groups, local development corporations, law firms, and non-profit groups. The non-profit New York City Partnership assisted the City in carrying out this initiative.

The Task Force gathered information about brownfields site-assessment procedures, redevelopment practices, and obstacles to brownfields reuse. A kick-off meeting involving over

200 participants, covering the range of stakeholders, was held in September 1996. More than 150 community leaders and professionals in the fields described above divided into five subgroups organized around the following issues:

- Site Inventory, History, and Neighborhood Context
- Laws and Regulations Affecting Assessment and Reuse
- Investment, Insurance, and Market Opportunities and Constraints
- Testing, Sampling, Remediation Efforts, and Health Risks/End Uses
- Review of Brownfields Programs and Approaches Nationwide

### **Implementation Strategy**

The Task Force identified existing issues, laws, regulations, and investment practices that affect brownfield assessment. Additionally, the Task Force considered remediation and redevelopment alternatives and brownfield issues identified by the Community Districts within the City, and through the examination of brownfield programs conducted elsewhere. Based on the Task Force's efforts and the City's experience with brownfield sites, the MOEC will issue a final report summarizing the activities completed under the grant and the lessons learned about the investigation, cleanup, and reuse of brownfields within the City.

### **Community Involvement**

Using the geographic information system (GIS) acquired with funds from the grant, the MOEC identified 25 of the 59 community districts in the City that have both the greatest number of parcels and total acreage of vacant and underutilized sites within industrial zones. The MOEC met with these affected Community Boards and, using the GIS, conducted discussions with community representatives to identify sites of concern.

In June 1997, the New York City Pilot invited 475 stakeholders to participate in a National Brownfields Forum that focused national expertise and experience on New York City's brownfields issues. Invited guests from states and cities across the nation presented information about their jurisdictions' approaches to brownfields and discussed how their programs would address specific redevelopment problems at NYC sites. The forum elicited much useful information on innovative approaches to cleanup and redevelopment of brownfields.

## **III. Brownfields Site Activities**

### **Site Inventory**

The City developed a GIS base map system that links tax records with parcel files from the Department of City Planning. Data files linked to the system include zoning, land use, ownership, census, tax, sales, street, and building data, and Federal and New York State databases of listed or reported hazardous materials and spills. In 1997, the MOEC used information in the GIS database to make a preliminary calculation that there were approximately 6,000 vacant or abandoned industrially zoned properties covering between 3,000 and 4,000 acres in New York City. By pairing these files with other City, State and Federal program data, the City can identify which of these sites are within the Federal Empowerment Zone and/or the State Economic Development Zones.

### **Site Selection**

The analysis of the database of potential brownfield sites assisted the City in the selection of five pilot demonstration sites and in the development of programmatic approaches that will

benefit hundreds of affected sites. The Task Force efforts and the GIS, in conjunction with meetings with the affected communities, helped the City select the sites.

### **Site Assessment and Reuse Planning**

The City has selected five sites for assessment:

- # Barretto Point, Bronx
- # Bushwick Housing, Brooklyn
- # Carroll Gardens "Public Place", Brooklyn
- # Mariners Marsh, Staten Island
- # Vernam Barbadoes, Queens

Proposed reuse plans have been developed for most of these sites. The Barretto Point site's proposed reuse plan includes a public waterfront park and a water pollution control plant upgrade, separated by a buffer zone. The Bushwick Housing site's reuse plan contains a mix of affordable and low-income housing, commercial development, and community facilities. End use plans for Carroll Gardens will largely depend on the level of contamination found at the Site. At Mariners Marsh, the proposed plan is for active recreational use. The Vernam Barbadoes site, pursuant to a New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) consent order, will remain parkland. Small craft waterfront access, a concession renting kayaks and other non-motorized boats, and a food concession are being considered for the Site.

Descriptions of each site may be found in the site profiles.

## **IV. Measures of Success**

**Properties Estimated in Brownfields Pilot Areas:** In 1997, a preliminary calculation identified approximately 6,000 vacant or abandoned industrially zoned properties.

For the entire Pilot area, the number of properties/parcels which have been identified by the Pilot as brownfields. The Pilot area includes the entire jurisdiction of the Pilot (e.g., the entire City of Chicago or the State of Minnesota), not just the specific area(s) that the Pilot has defined as target areas.

**Properties Reported to be Contained in Pilot Inventories:** In 1997, a preliminary calculation identified approximately 6,000 vacant or abandoned industrially zoned properties.

For the entire Pilot area, the number of properties/parcels which have been included in an inventory of brownfields properties/parcels. Types of brownfields inventories include: lists, spreadsheets, and databases (geographic information systems or other forms). These inventories may include lists such as a foreclosure list of abandoned industrial sites, a state list of no-further actions sites, etc.

**Properties Reported to be Targeted by Pilot:** 5 are targeted by the EPA Pilot. Additional properties are targeted by other City agencies and private parties.

For the entire Pilot area, the number of brownfields properties/parcels the Pilot reports it is "targeting", or at which the Pilot says it will conduct, is conducting, or has conducted activities such as assessment, cleanup planning, facilitation of redevelopment, community outreach, etc.

## **V. Non-Site Specific Funding Leveraged**

Funding that has been leveraged under the pilot program, but cannot be attributed to any one site.

### **A. Non-Site Specific Funding Leveraged for Assessment**

Funded by: ☐ Local (City) ☐ Local (County) ☐ Private ☐ State ☐ Other Federal

Amount Funded: \$\_\_\_\_\_

Additional information concerning funding:

### **B. Non-Site Specific Funding Leveraged for Cleanup**

Funded by: ☐ Local (City) ☐ Local (County) ☐ Private ☐ State ☐ Other Federal

Amount Funded: \$\_\_\_\_\_

Additional information concerning funding:

### **C. Non-Site Specific Funding Leveraged for Redevelopment**

Funded by: ☐ Local (City) ☐ Local (County) ☐ Private ☐ State ☐ Other Federal

Amount Funded: \$\_\_\_\_\_

Additional information concerning funding:

## **VI. Current Activities**

The Mayor's Office of Environmental Coordination is currently working with City agencies, the NYSDEC, U.S. EPA, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and KeySpan Energy Corporation to complete assessment work at the five pilot sites. At significant stages in the process, the Pilot is making information available to the general public concerning progress at the sites. On an ongoing basis, the MOEC shares information regarding brownfields efforts in New York City with various governmental agencies, elected officials, businesses, environmental/ community groups, and the public.

## **VII. Contact Information**

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